

# Migration of Yunnan People into Myanmar from Ancient Times to the 19th Century<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This article examines the migration from ancient times to the 19th century of Yunnan people to the area that is now known as Myanmar. Using primarily Chinese language documents, the study found that this migration can be divided into two periods. The first is from 1 to 1287 AD, when the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms in Yunnan had commercial and political relationships with the Pyu and Bagan kingdoms in Myanmar. Later, in 1274 the Yuan Dynasty governed Yunnan, and in 1287, after conquering Bagan, began to develop communications with Myanmar. Consequently, through roads and rivers, Yunnan people migrated to Myanmar both for political reasons as China sent soldiers and officers there, as well as for commercial reasons, such as mining and labor. The second period is 1288-1840. Since the time of the Ming Dynasty, Chinese communities have appeared in Myanmar for numerous political reasons, such as changes in dynasty, wars, government policies, as well as mining and trading. Roads and waterways served as migration routes.

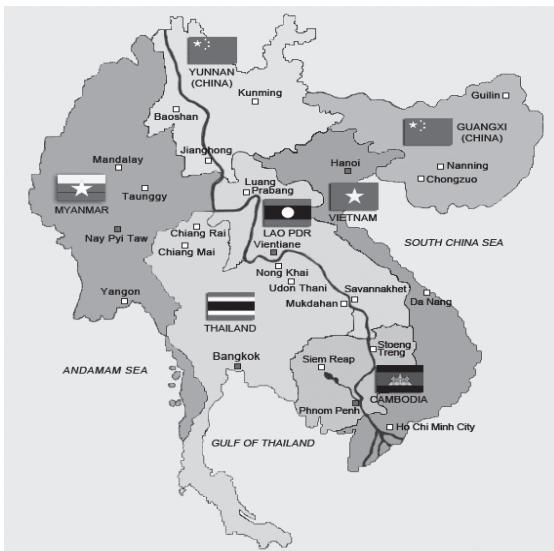
**Keywords:** migration, Yunnan, China, Myanmar, ancient times

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## Introduction

In the past, large numbers of Chinese people migrated to other countries, the majority to Southeast Asia. The Chinese have many words to refer to these migrants, including Tang Ren/唐人, Hua Ren/华人, Hua Gong/华工, Hua Min/华民, Hua Shang/华商, and Hua Qiao/华侨 (Wu, 1994: 7). In English, these people are known as “Overseas Chinese” or “Chinese Abroad” (Zhu, 1990: 1-2). Most earlier researchers who studied Chinese migration, such as Skinner (1957), Wang (1969), Zhu (1990), Wu (1994), and Reid (2010), were interested in examining migrant Chinese groups that used maritime routes, leaving a gap in knowledge about overland migration. This article seeks to fill that gap.

Yunnan, in southwest China, covers an area of 394,100 square kilometers, making it eighth in size among China’s provinces. It shares its northwestern border with the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), northern border with Sichuan province, eastern border with Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, western border with Myanmar, and southern border with Laos and Vietnam (People’s Government of Yunnan Province, 2017). Since ancient times Yunnan has helped China secure its southwestern border. Yunnan is considered important also because it links China’s interior with South and Southeast Asia. As recorded in Daoguang Yunnan Zhi Chao (道光云南志钞) annals, written by Wang Song (Wang/王崧, 1995: 199), during the Ching Dynasty, all roads through which tribute was transported to China passed through Yunnan.



**Figure 1** Location of Yunnan Province with a Myanmar-shared border

Source: Phun (2018)

As for Myanmar, it is a country in Southeast Asia and the Mekong basin region that shares a land frontier of 1,997 km. with China at Yunnan. Consequently, Yunnan and Myanmar have long had a close relationship and common history. For travel between them, land and river lines have mainly been used. In this research, the literature review found 11 relevant articles on these migrations, consisting of two groups. The first group focuses on the study of Yunnan people's entrance into Myanmar and Thailand from the 19th to the early 20th century. Examples are He (2005) and Zhang (2000). The second group consists of eight articles on the migration of the Hui ethnic group in Myanmar during the latter part of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) and onwards. Examples are Yao (2003) and He (1997). However, there are no works examining the reasons for migrating or the routes used by Yunnan people going to Myanmar. Thus, this article fills that gap by examining the migration of the Chinese people from Yunnan into Myanmar, from 1 to 1840. The purposes are to show the development of Chinese people's

migration, reasons for migrating and the conditions of the routes used. The historical research method was used, drawing primarily on Chinese language documents with other documents used to strengthen some points.

The discussion will be divided into two periods; the first is migration from ancient times until 1287, when the Bagan kingdom came to an end, and the second is migration during the years 1288-1840.

## **Migration of Yunnan People into Myanmar**

The migration of Yunnan people into Myanmar started during the time of Myanmar's oldest kingdom, the Pyu city-states. It ended the year that China and Myanmar were seized and governed by the Yuan Dynasty. Prior to 1287, China passed through many dynasties i.e., the Qin (221-207 BC), Han (202 BC – AD 220), Three Kingdoms (220-280), Jin (265-420), Northern and Southern dynasties (420-581), Sui (581-618), Tang (618-907), Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-960), Song (960-1279), and Yuan (1271-1368).

According to the historical account, Shi Ji (史记), written during the Western Han Dynasty, by Si MaQian (Si/司马迁, 1959:2991-2993), Yunnan and its surroundings since ancient times have been inhabited by many diverse ethnic groups. The Chinese referred to these groups as Xi Nan Yi (西南夷). During the Qin Dynasty, China opened the land route known as Wu Chi Dao (五尺道) which went from Szechwan to the northeastern part of Yunnan. Government officials were sent to administer it, symbolizing Yunnan's formal status as being under China's administration.

During the Tang Dynasty the Xin Tang Shu (新唐书) by Ou YangXiu and Song Qi (Ou/欧阳修 and Song/宋祁, 1975: 6270), written during the Song Dynasty, recorded that Piluoge, the leader of a small tribal state, extended his control over five neighboring kingdoms. In 738, he was appointed prince of Yunnan by the Tang Emperor Sawian Jong. During the Tang Dynasty, Nanzhao continuously expanded its administrative areas until it became independent. According to the historical account, Nan Zhao Ye Shi (南诏野史) written by Yang Shen

(Yang/杨慎, 1968: 66,75-76) during the Ming Dynasty, Nanzhao broke away in 902, and in 937 was replaced by the Dali kingdom, established by the Bai people in governing the Yunnan area. Dali had good economic and political relationships with the Song Dynasty and sent tribute to the Song court in 1116, 1117 and 1136. However, in 1253 it was crushed by the Mongol army, which established the Yuan Dynasty.

During the Ming Dynasty, according to the Yuan Shi (元史) by Song Lian (Song/宋濂, 1976: 3036; 1457-1458), Kublai Khan, in 1274 sent a Hui government official named Sai Dian Chi (赛典赤) to govern Yunnan, and in 1276, the Yunnan governing area was formally established. The administrative center was transferred from Dali to the city of Kūnmíng (昆明). According to the annals known as Xin Zuan Yun Nan Tong Zhi 7 (新纂云南通志7) (Niu, 2007: 659), because Yunnan had many different ethnic groups, the Yuan Dynasty implemented the Tu Si (土司) system to govern various localities, and influential heads of ethnic minorities were appointed as noblemen. Under the Tun Tian (屯田) system, the army was sent to Yunnan and soldiers were required to engage in agriculture (Song, 1976: 2558). Consequently, Han and Hui soldiers settled in Yunnan.

The economy since the time of the Qin Dynasty had been dependent on nature. The government's main source was through taxes from people who made their living by working the land. Therefore, the government policy (Wu et al., 1994: 31) prohibited people from migrating abroad until the Tang Dynasty, when China began to implement an open-door policy. However, only a small number of Chinese people left the country and most of them were ambassadors or traders. Afterwards, during the Song Dynasty, in order to increase the amount of state income, Chinese merchants were encouraged to leave the country to engage in trade; consequently, the number of people leaving the country increased. The Yuan Dynasty valued foreign trade development, which also contributed to an increase in the number of Chinese who migrated and settled abroad. However, their objective was not only to trade, but also to attain better livelihoods (Wu et al., 1994: 17).

The Pyu city-states were established in the first century in what is now Myanmar. Although they had expanded greatly by the 7<sup>th</sup> century,

in 832 (He, 1992: 20-21), they were broken up by the Nanzhao army (Htin Aung, 2008: 88). The Bagan kingdom was established by the Bamar people with Bagan city as the capital in 1044 (Htin Aung, 2008: 63). However, it began to decline in 1234. As recorded in the Yuan Su historical book (Song, 1976: 4656-4660), the Yuan Dynasty (the Mongols) and Bagan were involved in four wars against each other – in 1277, 1283, 1287 and 1300. The attack by the Mongolian court was one of the causes of Bagan’s demise (Hall, 1979: 201). Subsequently, during the Yuan Dynasty, Myanmar maintained a tribute system relationship.

### **Migration from the 1<sup>st</sup> Century to 1287**

The Sue Kee historical account refers to the overland trading route, Shu Yuan Du Dao (蜀身毒道) starting at Cheng Tu town, passing Yee Bin town in Sichuan as well as Shu Yuan Du Dao (蜀身毒道) in Yunnan, Ta Kong town in Myanmar, Manipur (presently in India); and entering India (Lu, 2011: 29). According to Htin Aung (2008: 6), the land route passing through Myanmar’s northern region had been in existence to transport goods from China to India since approximately 128 BC. According to the Chinese scholar, He (2005: 62), during the Han Dynasty, Yunnan merchants entered Myanmar through this road.

Since the time of the Han, trading existed between the Pyu city-states and Yunnan, as was mentioned in the historical account, Yonne written by Fan Chuo (Fan/樊绰, 1985: 314) during the Tang Dynasty. In Nanzhao, the Pyu people sold finless porpoise, cotton fabrics, stained glass, and pots that were used for storing water and wine. In addition, Hua Yang Guo Zhi (华阳国志) by Chang Qu (Chang/常璩, 2000: 57), written during the Eastern Jin Dynasty, recorded the following: “There are Pyu and Indian people in Yong Chang state (located at present Bao Shan town).”

As Htin Aung (2008: 88) notes, the Pyu city-states were defeated by the Nanzhao army, which captured 3,000 people, including royal family members, high-ranking civil servants, and other important persons. No information has been found in Chinese documents regarding the Yunnan people’s migration and settlement in the Pyu areas, but the

historical account, *Joo Fan Jue*, written during the Song Dynasty by Jao Yoo Sue, mentions the “Bagan kingdom, existing in Kongming (Zhuge Liang) Temple (Temple with statues of Zhuge Liang).” The possibility of a settlement of Chinese people in Myanmar was also suggested.

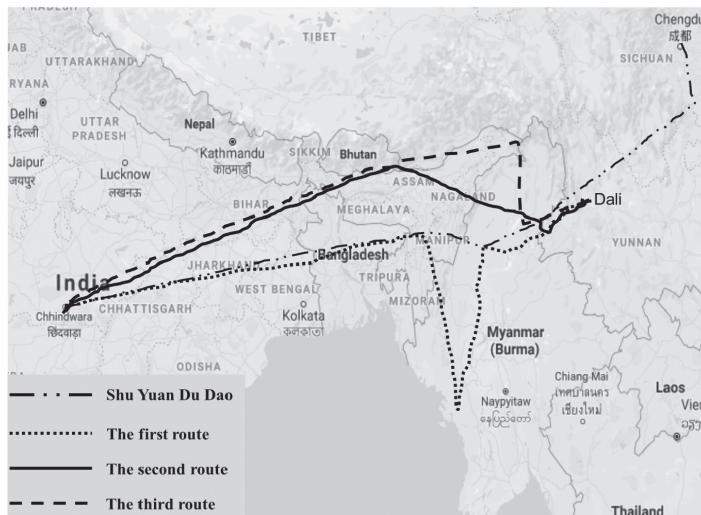
Contacts existed between ancient kingdoms (Pyu and Bagan) in Myanmar and ancient kingdoms in Yunnan (Nanzhao and Dali) for reasons related to politics, war, and trade. During the Yuan Dynasty, Yunnan people migrated to Bagan for two reasons – trading and the labor associated with it and politics. Regarding the first reason, at the time of the Yuan Dynasty’s administration of Yunnan, Myanmar had an abundance of gems. Gem trading between Yunnan and Myanmar had become popular since the time of the Yuan Dynasty. A large number of Yunnan traders entered Myanmar for gem trading in Myanmar’s northern region. According to He (1992: 94), in the 13th century in northern Myanmar, jade mines were first discovered by Yunnan traders. Myanmar’s jade mining technology came from Chinese jade, which was mined in northern Myanmar and transported by land and water to Thoeng Chong district and Dali in Yunnan, to be processed into jade products (Lu, 2011: 227). Furthermore, the development of the mining industry in Myanmar induced a number of Yunnan people to work as miners in Myanmar’s northern region (Xiao, 2014: 221).

During the Yuan Dynasty, the army was moved from Yunnan to attack Bagan. In 1287, to govern Myanmar’s northern region, a province was established. Moreover, to maintain administration, armies were sent to be regularly stationed in Myanmar. As recorded in the Yuan Sue historical account (Song, 1976: 4657-4659), in October 1277, a general by the name of Na Su Ci Ding (纳速刺丁), stationed in Yunnan, was sent from the Yuan court together with more than 3,840 soldiers to attack Myanmar. In 1286, the Yuan court sent 6,000 soldiers to Yunnan, and Yunnan sent an additional 1,000. A total of 7,000 soldiers attacked Bagan in 1287. As specified by Htin Aung (2008: 70), for three years Mongol soldiers, with no further military movement, were stationed in Muang Ta Kong. Chinese governmental officers, serving as rulers, were still sent by the Yuan court. According to the

Yuan Wen Lei by Su (1993: 523) written in 1287, Bagan faced an internal conflict. Yunnan governmental officers stationed in Pyay town were killed by Burmese people, demonstrating that in Myanmar, there were Yunnan people serving as regular governmental officers.

### **The Migration Route of Yunnan People into Myanmar from 1-1287.**

Prior to 1287 the Yunnan-Myanmar connecting route, Shu Yuan Du Dao (蜀身毒道) was an important land route that was opened for use during the Han Dynasty near the time of the Song Dynasty. It was Yunnan's communication route with outsiders. This route was improved and started in Yunnan, passed through Myanmar and went into India. The entire route consisted of land and marine routes, and later it was developed into three routes (Lu, 2011: 86-92), all starting in Dali, which are described below. The names of all locations are current ones.



**Figure 2** Routes between Yunnan and Myanmar during the Han Dynasty towards the time of the Song Dynasty

Source: Improved from Google Maps (2018a) by the authors, March 8, 2018

The first route started in Dali Bao Shan (保山) town; moved to Long Ling (龙陵) district; Rui Li (瑞丽) town in Yunnan; entered the Pyu kingdom; passed through the towns of Tagaung, Ava, and Prome/ Pyaynd; through the Arakan mountains; arrived at Manipur; passed the Ganges River; and arrived in present-day Bangladesh.

The second route started in Dali, passed Bao Shan, Long Ling district, ZhanXi (盏西) sub-district, towards the west; passed the Irawaddy river; reached Mogaung towards the west; passed the Chindwin river; reached Assam State's northeast area; moved west, passing the Naga mountain range; and arrived in India.

The third route started in Dali; passed Bao Shan town; Teng Chong district; Xi Ma sub-district in Yunnan; moved towards the north; reaching Myitkyina town in Myanmar; moving north again, reached Putao, passed the Gaoligong snow mountain; and arrived in India's Assam state.

The Yuan court after governing Yunnan, in order to rapidly gain military information, tried to improve Yunnan's routes as well as to establish resting stations known as Yi Zhan (驿站).<sup>2</sup> On another level, the overland route between Yunnan and Myanmar was improved. This route started in Kunming, passed through Dali and reached Thoeng Chong district. Then, entering Myanmar, the route was divided into three (Lu, 2011: 157-158), as follows.

<sup>2</sup> Yi Zhan (驿站) were horse-resting stations for people or government officers in charge of official delivery of documents, or military inspection units. They also served as places to rest and change horses during a journey.

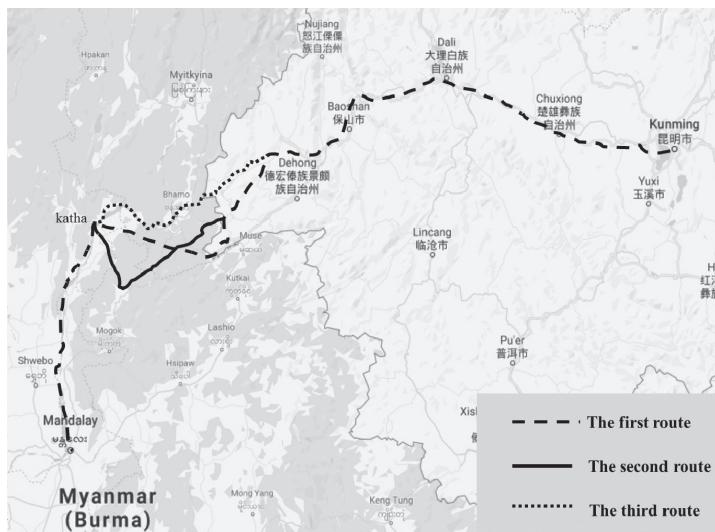


Figure 3 Yunnan-Myanmar route during the Yuan Dynasty

Source: Improved from Google Maps (2018b) by the authors, March 8, 2018

The first route, from Thoeng Chong district, passed through Liang He (梁河) district, Qing Ping (清平) village; Zhang Feng (章凤) sub-district, Long Chuan (陇川) district, arrived at Rui Li town, passed the Tian Ma (天马) checkpoint, and entered Myanmar. After that, to reach Ava town, two days were spent on both land and waterways. From ancient until modern times, this route served as the main line from Yunnan into Myanmar.

The second route, from Liang Hoe district, passed Shan Mu Long (杉木笼) village; Jang Foeng sub-district; reached Long Chuan district; passed the Hu Ju (虎踞) checkpoint and entered Myanmar through Piao Dian (骠甸, located in Mabein in Myanmar); and arrived in Jiang Tou Chen (江头城<sup>3</sup>).

The third route was a waterway that linked Thoeng Chong district with Ying Jian district. Starting from the Da Ying Jiang river,

<sup>3</sup> Regarding Jiang Tou Chen (江头城), Chinese academicians are of two different ideas. The traditional idea is that it was known as “Bhamo town” in Myanmar. The new idea is that it was called “Katha” in Myanmar (Zhuang, 2011: 6).

it reached Jian Tho town, and further to the Irawaddy, Myanmar's important river, it became a convenient route for traveling between China and Myanmar (He, 2016: 5).

### **Migration, 1288-1840: The Context of Yunnan**

By this time period, China had passed through three dynasties – the Yuan (1271-1368), the Ming (1368-1644) and the Ching (1644-1912). The Ming Shi historical account, written during the Ching Dynasty by Zhang (1974: 1171), summarizes the history of the Ming Dynasty as follows. During this period, the Department of Local Administration and Department of Command were established to control and manage important activities of Yunnan province. Consequently, Yunnan had more complete administrative power and, under the Tu Si system, which the early Ming Dynasty inherited, cultural minorities could secede easily. Such conditions threatened the stability of the Ming government. Therefore, the dynasty carried out measures to weaken the Thun Tian system and at the same time implemented a policy allowing a large number of Han people from the inner provinces to take over vacant land in Yunnan province for cultivation. As a consequence of the Han migration, the politics during the Ming Dynasty became centralized and the borders stable. It also served as a basic foundation for the transformation of the Tu Si system, which became one in which noblemen, instead of heads of local cultural minorities, were appointed by the ruling center to hold positions.

During the Ching Dynasty, the Qing Shi Gao (清史稿) historical account reported that during the period of Emperor Yong Joeng (1722-1735), the court discontinued the Tu Si system regarding cultural minorities (Zhao, 1977: 14255). This was a major social transformation, as the power of Tu Si and local authorities who occupied the land with military power was weakened. As for migration abroad, during the early Ming period, people were still not allowed to exit the country, but under the rule of Emperor Yong Loe (1403-1424), the policy was improved and during the years 1405-1433, the famous explorer Zheng

He was sent out for a marine survey (Kruarattikan, 2013: 2). Although the marine blockade policy ended in 1561, the Ming court was still hostile towards the Overseas Chinese (Wu et al., 1994: 41), who were seen as pirates and were suppressed.

During its early to middle periods, the Ching court implemented closed-country and marine-blocking policies. Chinese people were prohibited from travelling abroad. They were also prohibited from succeeding through the Ming court's hostile attitude towards the Overseas Chinese. Later, in 1860, during the second Opium War, the Ching Dynasty was defeated and China signed the Peking Convention with England and France. Consequently, the Ching government had to allow Chinese laborers to leave China and go to other countries as a symbol of the formal termination of the country's closure and marine obstruction policies. Finally, the Ching Dynasty changed its attitude to one of friendliness toward Overseas Chinese (Wan, 2001: 10-11).

### **Migration, 1288-1840: The Myanmar Context**

After the demise of Bagan, from 1287 to 1531 many towns and kingdoms in Myanmar became independent. They were Pinya (1312-1364), Sagaing (1315-1364), Ang Wa (1364-1555), and Hong Sawadi (Bago) (1287-1539). During the Toungoo Dynasty (1486-1752), Myanmar successfully unified all of these kingdoms, but following the collapse of the Toungoo Dynasty, the Konbaung or Alaungpaya Dynasty, Myanmar's last, was established by Alaungpaya (1752-1885). Subsequently, Myanmar became a colony of England. With the Treaty of Yandabo, England in 1826 entered and seized parts of Myanmar. By 1885, through three wars with Myanmar, England occupied the entire country (Htin Aung, 2008).

### **Yunnan People's Migration into Myanmar, 1288-1840**

There are many reasons for the migration of Yunnan people into Myanmar in the period 1288-1840, including trade and mining. Since

the time of Yuan Dynasty, the routes between Yunnan and Myanmar were improved. Consequently, the goods passing between Yunnan and Myanmar were diverse. During the Ming Dynasty, cotton, seashells, ornaments and jade were the main goods imported from Myanmar by Yunnan, while silk cloth, salt, groceries and other local products, were the main goods exported to Myanmar by Yunnan (Wu, 2002: 57). As for Chinese communities in Myanmar, the *Xi Nan Yi Feng Tu Ji* history, written during the Ming Dynasty by Zhu Meng Zhen, reported that a Chinese community was founded next to Da Ming Jie (大明街) with more than 10,000 Chinese traders and craftsmen who had come to trade.

During the Ching Dynasty, trading between Yunnan and Myanmar increased, and in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, large caravans of several hundred to more than a thousand people were engaged in trading between Yunnan and Myanmar. More than 2,000 horses were used to transport goods. Until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, raw silk, satin, gold, tea, paper, dried fruits, utensils, copper, and iron were the main goods transported from Yunnan to Myanmar, while cotton, amber, ivory, jade, betel nut, birds' nests, and lacquer ware were transported from Myanmar to Yunnan (Lin, 2006: 135). Yunnanese merchants living in Myanmar worked as middlemen in Yunnan-Myanmar trading (Wu, 2002: 79-80).

An interesting development during the Ching Dynasty was the establishment of numerous trading associations, called *Shang Hao* (商号) in Chinese by Yunnan traders, four of which were famous and large in size. Three were established by Yunnanese who had come from Thoeng Chong district: *San Cheng Hao* (三成号), *Yong Mao He Shang Hao* (永茂和商号), *Fu Chun Heng Shang Hao* (福春恒商号), and *Xing Sheng He Shang Hao* (兴盛和商号). The other, *Xing Sheng He Shang Hao* (兴盛和商号), was established by Yunnan people who had come from He Qing (鹤庆) district (Wu, 2002: 85-86). The *Teng Yue Xiang Tu Zhi* (腾越乡土志) annals, written during the Ching Dynasty, recorded the following: "Inhabitants of Thoeng Chong district were greater in number than 60,000. However, more than half of them were traders. The majority of traders who had come from Thoeng Chong engaged in trading in Myanmar. And, each year hundreds of Thoeng Chong traders

went to Myanmar to trade. A number of them were located in Xin Jie (新街<sup>4</sup>), Xang Wa, and Yangon. There were both large and small Shang Hao (商号) engaged in trading between Yunnan and Myanmar" (Cun, 2005: 88-145).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, trading activities were spread to Myanmar's entire northern region by Yunnan merchants residing in Bhamo, Inwa, Amornpura, Sagaing and Chiang Tung (He, 2005: 80). The history book, *Hai Ke Ri Tan* (海客日譚) by Wang (1969: 82,109), written during the Ching Dynasty, reported: "In Sin Jia, more than 1,000 Yunnan people settled, 90 percent of whom were from Teng Yue (腾越), presently, Thoeng Chong district. At Amornpura (譳拉菩那), there were more than 4,000 Yunnanese families and more than 100 Fu Jian and Kwang Tung families, but four only Sichuan families."

### **Mining Labor-related Reasons**

Since the time of the Ming Dynasty, gems from Myanmar had been in great demand by the Chinese market leading to rapid development of the mining industry in Myanmar. Thus, a large number of Yunnan people migrated to Myanmar to work as laborers in mining. The history book, *Zheng Mian Ji Lue* (征緬紀略) by Wang (1989: 875), written during the Ching Dynasty, reported that silver mines at Bo Long (波龙) mountain were plentiful. Tens of thousands of Chinese from Jiang Si, Hu Pe, and Hu Nan counties, and Dali and Pao San towns in Yunnan assembled at Bo Long and worked in silver mining.

Moreover, the following was recorded in the *Tao kwang yunnan jue chao* annals (Wang, 1995: 214): In Wa State, a silver mining factory known as Mao Long (茂隆) was opened by Wu Shang Xiang (吴尚贤), a Yunnan man who had come from Shi Ping (石屏) district. In 1746, during its peak period, it had more than 100,000 miners. Therefore, based on the above documents, it is obvious that a large number of Chinese and Yunnan people migrated to work as laborers.

<sup>4</sup> Xin Jie (新街) was Jiang Tou Chen (江头城) town. Presently, the name is Bhamo.

## Political Reasons

There were many political reasons for migration from Yunnan into Myanmar. The first concerned the changes in China's dynasties. The historical book, Ming Sue (Zhang, 1974: 3656), reported that because of the change from the Ming to the Ching Dynasty, Gui Wang, or Prince Gui (桂王), heir to the Ming Dynasty who is referred to in some books as Emperor Yong Lee, took political refuge. Through both land routes and waterways, in 1659, with more than 1,500 followers, Prince Gui left Yunnan for Sakai, which is close to Ava. Later, in 1661, the Ching army marched from Yunnan to Myanmar. Prince Gui was captured and was executed in Kunming in 1662. The prince's followers who were still in Myanmar settled down in Myanmar's northern region and married local people. Descendants of this group of people, who engage in trading, agriculture and mining (Wu et al., 1994: 135) are called Gui Jia (桂家) by the Burmese.

Wars were another reason for migration. In the book titled, Le Shi (泐史) (Li, 1947: 28), the following was recorded: "In 1627, the army of the Tong O Dynasty attacked Xishuangbanna and forcibly moved the Dai people living there to Ava. Later, at the time of the Alaungpaya Dynasty, 1765-1769, war broke out with China. Consequently, thousands of soldiers from Yunnan were caught and made captives in Myanmar. As appeared in the document, Zheng Xiaoyue (Wang, 1989: 878), in 1766, a new governor was appointed by the Chinese emperor to a station in Yunnan to replace the former governor who had committed suicide after having been defeated in a war with Myanmar. To deter Myanmar at the border, an army of 14,000 soldiers was raised by the governor. As mentioned in Htin Aung (2008: 178), the Chinese army was defeated by Myanmar army upon its arrival at Bhamo (Myanmar).

The following year, in an historical account of the military during the time Ching Dynasty known as Sheng Wu Ji (圣武记) written by Wei Yuan (Wei/魏源 1984: 264-265) the following was recorded: "In 1767, the Chinese emperor appointed General Ming Rui (明瑞) as the new governor of Yunnan. The emperor sent two regiments, consisting of

more than 23,000 soldiers from Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan to attack Myanmar. Through a land route, General Ming Rui (明瑞) led an army of 12,000 soldiers to Myanmar. The other regiment used a river route to enter Myanmar. It was planned that the two armies would together seize Ava, the capital city of Myanmar at the time.” However, from this document, we know that China’s main army had lost its way and was surrounded by Myanmar’s army. China’s army was decimated. Consequently, the following year, an army was sent to Myanmar by the Ching emperor. According to the *Qing Shi Lu* (清实录第19册) (1986: 338), written during the Ching Dynasty, in 1768, the Chinese emperor appointed a new governor for Yunnan. In 1769 over 31,000 soldiers were sent to attack Myanmar. Through both land routes and waterways, the Chinese army entered Bhamo, where it fought the Myanmar army. In this war, both sides suffered greatly. Eventually, this war ended with a peace treaty between Myanmar and China. Htin Aung (2008: 181-182), points out that although the treaty called for all prisoners of war to be released, China refused to release Myanmar’s prisoners, and Myanmar also refused to return China’s prisoners.

Yang (2003: 46), a Chinese academic, mentions Myanmar’s capture of approximately 3,000 Chinese prisoners, while British academic Harvey (1973: 453-454) puts the number at 2,500. The descendants of these 2,500 Chinese prisoners still live in Myanmar, engage in either agriculture or crafts in Myanmar and are married to local Burmese women.

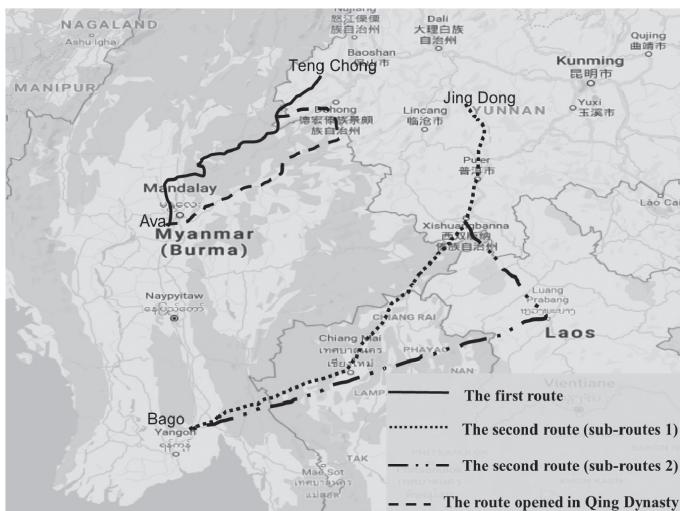
The third reason for migration was the impact of the central government’s policy. According to the *Ching Sue Kao*, the historical record of the Ching dynasty (Zhao, 1977: 14255-14258), during the reign of Ching Emperor Yong Joeng (1722-1735), the *Tu Si* system in Yunnan was abolished. Termination of this system led to resistance from leaders of cultural minorities who used to be mandated for administrative power over their own groups. Consequently, many minorities fled to Myanmar and Laos, and the Ching court sent soldiers to patrol the border routes between Yunnan and Myanmar and Laos (Wei, 1984: 288).

## Migration Routes, 1288-1840

Contact routes between Yunnan and Myanmar were developed continuously over many years. For example, along the Yunnan-Myanmar route, Yi Zhan (驿站) were first established during the Yuan Dynasty. Fortresses and military facilities were added during the Ming Dynasty, (Lu, 2011: 179) as were two more routes from Yunnan to Myanmar (Lu, 2011: 192-196).

The first route started in Teng Chong district; passing through Long Chuan district; Rui Li town; following Rui Li, and the Shweli River; arrived at Manna village in Myanmar; passed through Momeik sub-district; Mogok town; and arrived in Ava. This route served as the main route for both the tribute and for the jade trade between Myanmar and China. Interestingly, for travel from Yunnan to the lower part of Myanmar, the Irawaddy river was not directly used. Instead, the land route that passed through Tong and arrived in Bago, (or Hong Sawadi) in lower Myanmar, was used.

The second major route started in Jing Dong (景东) district, passing through Zhen Yuan (镇沅) district, Phu Er and Chiang Rung. Then it divided into 2 sub-routes. One passed through Chiang Mai in Thailand and arrived in Bago, in Myanmar. The other was from Chiang Rung, passed through Luang Prabang in Laos, and also arrived in Bago. These two routes not only served as routes of tribute between Myanmar and China; for Yunnan, they also served as important routes to the sea.



**Figure 4** Routes that were opened during the Ming Ching Dynasty

Source: Improved from Google Maps (2018c) by the authors, March 8, 2018

Later, during the Ching Dynasty, land and water routes between Yunnan and Myanmar were improved. The Ching Dynasty also opened another route between Yunnan and Myanmar. The route started in Thoeng Chong district, passed through Long Chuan district, Mang Shi (芒市) town, Zhen Kang (镇康) district, entered Myanmar, passed through Hsenwi (or Theinni) sub-district, La Sio town and proceeded to Ang Wa (Lu, 2011: 204-205).

## Conclusion

This research found that the migration of people from Yunnan into Myanmar from ancient times until 1840 can be divided into two periods. During the first period: 1<sup>st</sup> century – 1287, ancient kingdoms existed in Yunnan and Myanmar which had commercial and political relationships. This was the main reason for Yunnan people to enter Myanmar through land and river lines that mainly passed through Myanmar into India. However, evidence of Yunnan people's settlements in Myanmar have not yet been found. During the time when the Yuan

Dynasty governed Yunnan and waged war to occupy Myanmar, a large number of Yunnan people went to Myanmar to trade or to serve as soldiers or government officers. Three more land and river lines were developed, all of which passed Jiang Tho town and on to the Irawaddy river and Lower Myanmar.

During the second period, 1288-1840, after the demise of Bagan, other kingdoms were established, while China until the Ching Dynasty continued governing Yunnan. The reasons for Yunnan people's migration into Myanmar were more diverse, and included Yunnan-Myanmar trading expansion, political relationships, Myanmar-China wars, and changes in China's policy towards cultural minorities in Yunnan during the Ching Dynasty. Migrant groups became more diverse and included merchants, captive soldiers or left-behind soldiers such as injured soldiers, officials, and political refugees. Consequently, permanent settlements were created in many Myanmar towns and two new routes were opened during the Ming Dynasty towards Bago in lower Myanmar, passing through various towns. Through these two minor routes, Yunnan was connected to the sea.

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